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CONCERNING
MARRIAGE:

A
L E T T E R

Sent to *G. F.*

And with it, a Copy of an Answer to a Friends Letter

CONCERNING MARRIAGE.

And some Queries, and his Reply to the Answer and Queries, and an Additional to *G. F.*'s Reply, containing 13 Queries concerning Marriage; Also the manner how the parties intending Marriage are to go together.

Published by *Benjamin Lawrence* by the consent and advice of Friends,

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Faultes escaped.

QUery 3. lin. 18, 19. should be 27, 28. Querie 5. lin. 21. should be lines 29, 30. latter end of the 7. querie, next the words, *Gods counsell and Gods time*, before the word *note* is left out these words, *others not answering Gods stirrings*, yet think to deal sure, sure enough of trouble and sorrow, a curse and not a blessing. pag. 10. lin. 4. *staid for stirred*; about the middle of the 10. pag. *so in times* is set for *sometimes*; after Querie 13. strike out *a*, and leave *year after*.

Concerning Marriage,

A Letter sent to G. F.

Loving friend, something in answer to a friends Letter who desired counsel concerning marriage, hath occasioned several Queries. To the Answer and Queries if there be some Reply, it may do well.

Thomas Lawrence.

The Copy of an Answer to a friends Letter concerning Marriage.

Friend, That marriage is Gods Ordinance, which is joyned in, and by the Lord. The honourable marriage is when the bed is undefiled, transgression finished, freedom from sin witnessed, victory over the world known, and the enmity kept under, an absolute divorce from all that the first nature hath been wedded to, and committed uncleanness with, in the time of ignorance. When Lovers are moved and guided by the Light in coolness and moderation, waiting in Gods counsel, then the honourable marriage may be known in the Light, and all children of Light will have unity with it. When one man and one woman, out of transgression, are joyned together in and by the Lord, let no man put them asunder. Forbidding to marry is the doctrine of Devils.

But for any that cannot witness transgression finished, nor scarcely know what it is, who live in sin, and say God hath joyned them in marriage, is it not a lie against God and his Ordinance? God instituted marriage before sin was, and doth it when sin is done away, and is the same for ever, who joyneth nothing but that which is pure; all that is hasty and hankering after fleshly motions, is not Gods moving: some have been observed not to have grown in truth, but deadness, and losing the condition, have followed after marriage: nothing defiled is to be owned, much less to be endeavoured after.

Thomas Lawrence.

Some Queries occasioned by the foregoing Answer.

1 **W**Hether Joyning together in marriage by such as cannot witness freedom from all sin, be Gods Ordinance, or of the world?

2. Whether the marriage-bed be undefiled whilst any kind of sin remaineth?

3. What is the difference between such as can witness freedom from all sin, and do keep the enmity under, and marry; and others that do not only live in sin, but have enmity against them that hold there is a freedom from sin?

4. Whether children of Parents that are both or either of them free from transgression, are conceived and born in sin, or are they clean and holy?

5. Whether deadness and losing the condition have not followed some minding marriage?

G.F. his Reply to the Answer and Queries sent to T.L. by a friend, and is as followeth.

1 **F**riend, concerning Marriage, to know it as it was before
 2 man fell, which were both in the image of God, that is
 3 the state out of the fall again of Gods joyning, not as man
 4 joyns; but as God joyns; not joynd by the Laws of men,
 5 but by the Power of God and his image; so to know the
 6 Jews; that after they came out of Egypt they did go toge-
 7 ther, and hardness of heart got up amongst them, and there
 8 was a Bill of divorcement given that they should depart; but
 9 in the beginning it was not so, when God made them Male
 10 and Female, whom he joyns together; let none put asun-
 11 dera, for men may put together and put asunder again,
 12 And the state of the Christians and Gentiles; there may
 13 something sit from the Lord, as particularly *Hester*. And
 14 though the Jews did go into hardness of heart afterwards,
 15 there might be something stirring of God at first; and
 16 likewise the Apostle saith, It is better to marry then to
 17 burn; shewing there is a state to prevent the burning; it
 18 was not a sin in that state: and there is a state where the
 be-

19 believing wife sanctifies the unbelieving husband, and the
 20 believing husband sanctifies the unbelieving wife, else were
 21 the children unholy, but now are they clean, which is
 22 through the sanctification, which is through the belief;
 23 for he that believes hath passed from death to life, and so
 24 from the sin, and overcomes the sin, and so then there is a
 25 state to be married as they were not, as passive; and none
 26 of these states that is kept in the power of the Lord God is
 27 sin; but to know it as it was in the beginning before man
 28 fell, that is a state before defilement was; and none of these
 29 states are condemned; and all deadness and losing the con-
 30 dition comes in the going from the power of God.

G. F.

An Additional to G. F. his Reply.

Friend, I received from thee by the Carrier, G. F. his reply to the Answer and Letter of Queries, which appeared at first to whom it particularly concerned, as a parable; and to the thing in question, but little answer. G. F. being told so, said; he did usually answer to the ground of a thing rather than the words. But this reply being weighed, is found so full (though short) that it may serve for a standard rule to answer all Queries that ever need be made concerning marriage. Take an example from the Queries sent to G. F. and some more, being referred to his lines; as followeth.

1 *Query.* Whether joyning together in marriage by such as cannot witness freedom from all sin, be Gods ordinance, or of the World? *Ans.* Gods joyning is a state out of the fall again, by the power of God and his image; lines 1. 2. 3. Such as are redeemed out of the fall into the image of God, and marry, is Gods ordinance; and such as are in the War, who cannot as yet witness freedom from all sin, yet if they do believe there is such a freedom, and do endeavour to attain it, who can witness a growth, and do abide faithful, and marry, this may be Gods ordinance also. In the time of ignorance God winked; but now such as do not only deny freedom from sin after they have been admonished to the truth, but contend against it, as

firming that none can be free from sin on this side the grave, and not only live in sin, but profess they must do so: if such marry, their marriage is of the World, in the fall, out of the power of God and his image, not as God joyns; and though they may be faithful one to another, yet they are not faithful to God, out of the doctrine of Scripture, are in the defiled bed, their children unclean.

2 *Querie*. Whether the marriage bed be undefiled whilst any kind of sin remaineth? *Answer*. He that believes, hath passed from death to life, and so from the sin, and overcomes the sin, *Turn to G.F. Letter, pag 2. lines 23. 24.* To know marriage as it was in the beginning before man fell, is a state before defilement was, *lin. 27. 28.* and such as live in sin, and say they never look to be otherwise in this life, are not they in the defilement? is not all sin defilement? is not their bed defiled, and all that they do? *to the unclean all things are unclean*, though they may be faithful each to other concerning bodily act. Here the honourable marriage of Gods joyning, out of transgression, goes over the head of the Worlds marriages of man joyning in the sin, though they boast and mock at the simplicity of truth, and them that live in it.

3 *Querie*. What is the difference between such as can witness freedom from sin, and do keep the enmity under, and marry; and others that do not only live in sin, but are in enmity against them that hold there is freedom from sin? *Answer*. The first are of Gods joyning, both in the image of God, out of the fall again, *lin. 1. 2.* overcome the sin, and marry as others do not; as passive, as it was in the beginning, before defilement was, *lin. 18. 19.* others joyn in their own wills and affections, out of the power of God and his image, not as God joyns, but as man joyns, have trouble in the flesh, cares, differing, children unclean, and many sad effects which are incident to all marriages in the fall.

4 *Querie*. Whether children of Parents, who are both or either of them out of transgression, are conceived and born in sin, or are they clean and holy? *Answer*. There is a state where the believing wife sanctifies the unbelieving husband, and the believing husband sanctifies the unbelieving wife; else were

your

your children unholy, but now they are clean, which is through the sanctification, which is through the belief; he that believes, hath passed from death to life, and so from the sin, and overcomes the sin: *lin. from the 17, to the 27.* Is it a small thing to consider? or did Parents seriously weigh what their children do inherit from them in the seed, it might be a motive to throughout sanctification to all tender-hearted Parents, for their childrens sake. *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth* both were just before God, and *John* was filled with the Holy Ghost from his Mothers womb; God created one man and one woman out of transgression, *Mal. 2.* that he might have a godly seed to replenish the earth and subdue it.

5 *Querie.* Whether deadness and losing the condition be not the more incident to some minding marriage? *Ans.* All deadness and losing the condition, comes in going from the power of God, *lin. 21.*

6 *Querie.* Whether children may not marry without consent of Parents? and whether Parents may not give or deny their consent to their children in marriage? *Ans.* In the beginning God made them male and female; whom he joyns together, let no man put asunder, *lin. 10. 11.* no not natural Parents, but give their consent; then answered *Laban* and *Bethuel* and said, This thing is proceeded of the Lord, we cannot say unto thee evil nor good. Also spiritual Parents give their consent. *Paul* gave his consent to the Apostles, Bishops, Ministers, any, if need so require, let them marry. But such marriages as man joyns, not as God joyns, Parents may deny their consent; *Paul* denied his consent, saying, Be not unequally yoked with Infidels, *Isaac* and *Rebecca* denied their consent, and *Isaac* said unto *Jacob*, Take not a wife of the daughters of *Canaan*, and *Jacob* obeyed his father and his mother, *Gen. 28. 7.* Obey them that have the oversight of you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your souls; be obedient to such as have given themselves to minister to the Saints, and to all that help with them, and labour. All Friends that intend marriage, take counsel of the ministers of truth, not conclude marriage first, and acquaint them with it after, but be obedient to Parents, that your days may be long in the land, and the earth may be replenished

plenished with an holy seed that may rule in righteousness, who are obedient to their spiritual Parents, cannot disobey their natural father and mother, who are not to force their children to marry against their consent; the Parents and kindred called *Rebecca*, and said, Wilt thou go with this man? and she said, I will go.

7 *Querie*. Whether any may know Gods will absolute and infallible concerning their marriage, as whether such a person be appointed of God to be a fit help, forasmuch as some have been so perswaded, yet failed? *Answ.* To know marriage as God joyns, is to know it as it was before man fell, *lin. 1.* a certain knowledge, this is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. *Adam* knew Gods appointment, *Abraham* knew Gods appointment, and said, God will send his Angel, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from thence. *Laban* and *Bethuel* knew Gods appointment, and said, This thing is proceeded of the Lord, for this cause (Gods wil manifest, Gods appointment, Gods ordinance) shall a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife. Some marry in their own wills, and say it is Gods will; Can any be obedient to Gods will and not know it, or not know it certain? this the Worlds Preachers and Professors cry, none is infallible say they; what then do they preach for? to make people doubt? or what shall any hear such for, that cannot tell certain? Who abides in the light, are in the unity, joyned to the Lord, are one spirit, one in desire, delight and sweetness, one will; what man wills, God wills; if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, saith Christ; ask what you will and it shall be done unto you; delight thy self in the Lord, and thou shalt have the desire of thine heart, not in thy own, but in Gods time. The Jews after they did come out of Egypt, did go together; there might be something stirring of God at first, *lin. 4. 12.* the state of the Gentiles and the Christians; there might be something stirring from the Lord, as particularly *Hester*, *lin. 13.* Jews, Gentiles, Christians. Gods stirrings have been in all generations, and all Gods stirrings are absolute and infallible, and that of God in every one, [which Answers, is infallible; and when any one is restored out of the fall, his assurance may be infallible also; though not so clear at first; it

is a growing condition, but in long tryal; a false faith from imagination, or a true Faith not continued in, may fail: This Query and Answer may charge such who blame others for not answering God's witness in them according to their persuasion, when as the persuasion was from imagination only, or if they had stirrings of God, have not continued in the truth, and waited for God's counsel and God's time; this one thing is to be noted especially, although this doctrine of absolute and infallible assurance, is here occasionally applyed to marriage; it is also true in all other things, prophecies, promises and revelations, things spiritual and temporal, and all conditions, prosperity and affliction: *Abraham* had faith for a seed, *David* for a Kingdom, *Jehosaphat* for Victory, the Centurion for his sick servant, the poor woman for cure of her issue, and many the like in Scripture; and have been of excellent use to many of God's servants, when he hath called them forth to sufferings and tryals of any kind, though they might not have so clear and distinct knowledge of it, what it was at the present: *Surely (said Jacob) the Lord was in this place, and I was not aware.*

Note.

Qu. 8. How may one come to know this infallible assurance in himself, and not be deceived?

Ans. How may one come to know infallibly the Sun shineth, but by his own light? The state of the Christians and the Gentiles, there might be something stirring from the Lord, as particularly *Hester*, lin. 13. and this is the most infallible and deepest ground of knowledge, the stirrings of God, the light in every conscience, in which while any abide, they may be certain; *If ye abide in me*, saith Christ, *Job. 15.* read it: But if any love to shut their eyes against what they know, by affected ignorance, through indulgence to several lusts, such may say they have seen the sun shine, and others tell them so, but they may be deceived; *He that believes, hath his witness in himself.* The Jews after they came out of Egypt, did go together, and hardness of heart got up, there might be something stirring of God at first, lin. 13. the time of discerning God's stirring to marriage clearly,

is after the coming out of Egypt, out of darknes into light, and they have put away the sin, if any be perswaded in their minds, that such a person is appointed of God to be a sic help; then signifie so much to the partie, who at present may feel no such thing, nor it may be, not in a long time after, yet take it off and lay it there; if after Denials there be yet stirrings of God, wait in that of God which stirs, believe and submit; a great mystery! let go, yet hold fast; submission and assurance may stand together, nay without submission assurance cannot stand; *Abraham* submitted and offered up his only Son; yet he was fully assured that he who had promised, was also able to do it.

Note, Although this doctrine concerning assurance of faith since the Apostacie have been denied by Preachers and Professors, in the time of the beast and false Prophet, yet it will stand over all their heads a truth according to Scripture. Witness the examples of *Abraham*, *David*, the Centurion, and many more, who all received according to their faith, the Lord may try and exercise his servants whom and when he pleaseth; and when he gives such a faith, he gives exercise. Gods promises are ever true, but oftentimes of long date.

9 Querie. Whether freedom from all sin, and infallible assurance of Gods will be of absolute necessity to every particular that joyns in marriage? *Ans.* He that believes, hath passed from death to life, and so from the sin, and overcomes the sin, *1 Jo.* 23. 24. to have infallible assurance there is freedom from all sin, to hunger and thirst, and press after it, to witness a growth, to be sincere in heart, and faithful to God in measure, is of absolute necessity to marriage in the Lord. Who comes short of this, are like *Cain*, he went out from the presence of the Lord and knew his wife; Secondly, For the parties to have infallible assurance they are in Gods covenant, do believe and are qualified as forefathers, to see in the light the thing is well pleasing to God, and to have unity with friends in the truth is of absolute necessity to Gods joyning in every particular, but to have assurance that such a person is appointed of God to be a sic help, is not of absolute necessity to every particular, but to such only to whom God reveals the thing.

Note,

Note. Let none wrest truth to their own and others hurt; It hath not been said that every true believer hath such a particular faith of assurance in every particular thing; nor are they condemned for not having such assurance; but if any have the gift of faith, and saint in the way, he is condemned for his unbelief, *Matth. 14. 31.* *O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?* But if any being stirred of the Lord, do desire such a blessing as *Abraham* did an Heir, *What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?* or desire a deliverance, as *Jehosaphat* did, *O God, we know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee?* Or to desire longer life, as *Hezekiah* did; or that *Christ's* power might be manifest, as *Peter* did; God that stirred up such a prayer, and hath given such a faith in his Word that is in the heart, being continued in, will most certainly perform the thing.

Obj. *Abraham* had an Angel to tell him *Sarah* his Wife should have a son; so have we *Christ Jesus* the Angel of the Covenant, he sends forth Ministering spirits for the good of the heirs of salvation; it were well mankind did better know the guard, assistance, communion and fellowship of good Angels.

Jehosaphat had a Prophet to tell him of the deliverance; so have we a prophet of our brethren, that God hath raised according to his promise by *Moses* the servant of the Lord; and whosoever will not hear that prophet in such a case, he shall be cut off from that enjoyment.

Hezekiah had a promise that fifteen yeers should be added to his life; so have we a promise, yea the same promise; if the same spirit of the Lord open and apply it, even for longer life: God made a promise to *Joshua*, *I will not leave thee nor forsake thee*; the Authot to the Hebrews applyes it to all believers, *Heb 13. 5.* and all promises in Scripture are made good to every believer as God in wisdom gives them out of his treasury: If a man have the Bible in his house, nay if he had all the promises in Scripture drawn up into a Catalogue, if he have not the same spirit that gave them forth, to open and apply them, or any particular of them, he is never the better for them all.

Peter had *Christ* present with him, and *Christ* spoke to him to come on the water; so have we *Christ* present with us; the Word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, and God

hath spoken to us by his Son, and sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, and teacheth us to pray as we ought.

House and Land are the Inheritance of a Father, said Solomon, but a prudent Wife cometh of the Lord: If any be afraid of the Lord to desire his gift, and believe God's answer that he shall have a prudent Wife, then he may have such assurance also it may be of the person, that Abraham's servant had; even she that said, Drink, and I will give thy Camels drink; and of the time as Jehosaphat and Elisha had, to morrow, 2 Chron. 20. to morrow, this time, 2 Kings 7. and also of the means, an Angel, as Tobias had, Tob. from the 5. to the 13. chap. and as Abraham had for his servant, God will send his Angel, and thou shalt take a Wife for my son from thence: And we are come to Mount Sion, to the company of innumerable Angels: The Angels are pure, chaste, modest spirits, and friendly, without deceit, who have joy in heaven when a sinner converteth; and the Kingdom of Heaven is within you: Whosoever hath a lustful, lascivious, false mind, the good Angel will not stay with such: The Angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him; sometimes contracted into one; the Angel of the Covenant, Peter's Angel: An Angel slew one hundred and fourscore thousand of the army of Senacherib; and so in times enlarged to be more, two Angels, three Angels, seven Angels, twelve Legions of Angels, innumerable Angels, who have the testimony of Jesus, are Ministering Spirits, whether in a visible form, as to Abraham and Tobias, or invisible, as to Abraham's servant, and Christ, and in him to the heirs of salvation; the honourable marriage, out of transgression, hath God, Angels, and all good men to encourage it.

Qu 10. Seeing there may be denials, lets, and intermissions before the finishing of Marriage, and when it is finished, to know certainly it was of God's stirring, and of God's joyning, may be a continual comfort; then how may one retain this certain knowledge, & not lose his condition?

Ans. Losing the condition cometh in going from the power of God, *lin. 30.* To hold this condition, keep innocent, a conscience void of offence to God and man: When doubts arise, temptations come, and the many things cumber, heed nothing but God, and what is of God; know nothing, do nothing, be nothing but what thou beest in God; God all, self nothing;

nothing: *Enoch* walked with God, and he was not; and when ye are clean through the Word which Christ hath spoken, keep the watch against relapses, lest they prove harder to cure than the first sickness: If there be failings, doubts will arise, and trouble, and questioning of several kinds; as, Whether there be such a Faith? or whether such things whereof one hath been certainly perswaded, was of God? which might be truly so, the stirrings of God not being diligently taken heed to, nor stayed in, but the mind drawn out into the many things; hardness got up, then followeth a divorce from all that communion and enjoyment.

Note. This particular infallible assurance of faith, concerns all other things as well as marriage, as to have assurance of pardon of sin, freedom from all sin, perseverance in the truth, deliverance out of trouble, and that the Kingdom, Dominion and greatness of the Kingdom under the whole Heaven, shall be given to the people of the Most High, freedom from wants, straits, poverty, sickness, and from the noisome pestilence.

Qu. 11. Whether one that hath attained to such assurance of faith, may not lose it? Ans. The Jews did go into hardness of heart afterwards; there might be something stir of God at first, *1. 6. 10. 11.* the people of *Israel* believed the Lord and his servant *Moses*; but afterward they hearkened not, whose carcases fell in the Wilderness; yet their faith at first was not from imagination nor fiction, *I said that thy house, and the house of thy Father should walk before me for ever, but now it shall not be so,* said the Lord to *Eli*; for they that honor me, I will honor. Disobedience and unbelief may lose eternal life, or any other blessing.

Qu. 12. Whether such as are of the true Religion, may marry with others that have been trained up in a false Religion? Ans. The state of the Christians and Gentiles, there may be something stirring from the Lord, as particularly *Hester*, *lin. 8, 9.* [who was made Queen to a Heathen King, *Hest. 2. 17.* and was a means to deliver her people and her Kindred from the bloody conspiracy of *Haman*: *Jacob* married *Laban's* Daughters, *Leah* and *Rachel*, and *Rachel* had stolne her father *Laban's* Idols, *Gen. 31, 32.* which *Laban* called his gods, *v. 30.* *Mablon* the son of *Eli-melech*, of *Bethlem* *Judah*, married *Ruth* a *Moabite*, and after him *Boaz*, *Ruth 4. 10.* and *Solomon* married *Pharaoh's* daughter an *Egyptian*; but she was perswaded to forget her Country and
Fathers

Fathers house; and so did *Ruth* and *Leah's* daughters, and came into the Land of *Israel*; and the people that were in the Gates, and the Elders said to *Boaz*, *The Lord make thy wife as Rachel and Leah, which twain did build the House of Israel*: But what is all this to them who in the deceit, not stirred of God, for lust, lucre, and self-ends, marry the daughters of men not converted to the true Faith? The example of *Hester* may afford two considerations, 1. That Friends of God know his secrets sometimes by extraordinary Revelations. 2. That such examples are no presidents for the people of the World to follow, no more then to go naked, to take a wife of Whoredoms, or offer up a sons life, because *Abraham* and some of the Prophets did so.

Qn. 13. *What may such do as are in the doubting, who say in themselves, Whether had I best marry, or abide? Whether had I best marry such a person, or not?* Ans. The state of the Christians and the Gentiles; there may something stir from the Lord, as particularly *Hester*, l. 13. who having something stir from the Lord for good ends, as followed, she was perswaded to receive the love of King *Ahasuerus* a Heathen, who loved *Hester* above all the women, and she found grace and favour in his sight, more then all the Virgins, so that he set the Crown of the Kingdom upon her head, and made her Queen instead of *Vashti*, and she had the counsel and consent of *Mordecai*, who took her for his own Daughter, *Hest*. 2. and so she became a deliverer and Nursing-Mother in *Israel*, while captive in *Babylon*. So if any be perswaded infallibly of Gods stirring, and Gods joining, all doubts are resolved. All friends, every particular, until til they be perswaded of Gods will certain and infallible concerning their marriage, were better forbear, and wait on God, in his Light to receive his counsel; how else do Friends differ from the World? the Light is the place of waiting for Gods stirring and manifestation; Gods stirring is the time for faith to act in what the light doth manifest, whether to be kept secret or declared. *Hester* shewed it not to her people nor her kindred, for *Mordecai* had charged her she should not tell it; haste thou faith, have it with thy self before God. *Paul* had revelations not lawful to utter, and things to utter that some could not bear, but when a word came to the Prophets from the Lord, they did declare infallibly, This saith the Lord, and in the New Testament

as the Spirit gave them utterance, and no otherway. But Preachers and Professors since Antichrists rise and reign, say Revelation is ceased; and none now can know and speak infallibly as the Prophets and Primitive Saints did; but learned men declare truths, according to Scripture; which is not true neither; for all the learned men in the World, with all their Libraries and learning, cannot know one line of Scripture but by revelation of the same Spirit that gave it forth; and all that I have put this question to, confess the same.

Note. Now this Querie is ended, let none question a year after, whether particular absolute infallible assurance be; but whether Do I live in it, and am I diligent to attain and keep it to my comfort? These Queries and Answers are to expel the confusion that may arise in many, why some have assurance of faith in particular; and not others, and not finding it ordinary, by experience, have denied infallible assurance wholly; and then all who have had stirrings to seek God and wait for his Counsel, might be certain, and to stop the hasty proceedings of some not rightly qualified, who though they profess truth, yet endeavour to marry as the World do; also to denote unto others who are tender of their lawful liberty to marry in the Lord, and to let them know, that they should not be so strict, as to shut out all motions to marriage that are not of God. To the unmarried; that they shut out all motions to marriage that are not of God. To the married, that they be helps to put away all sin, and witness the bed undefiled. To them that would have married, and have had many lusts, but failed, to consider whether they have not been ignorant or negligent of Gods stirrings, and have followed carnal desires, and self-ends, the usual provocations to the Worlds marriages; but to some that God will shew his loving kindness and favour, there are two ends of such long delays in mercy, 1. To break down and utterly destroy the body of sin and death, from whence carnal lusts and self-ends arise. 2. To qualify them to receive his blessing, to be married in the Lord, to know Gods call, Gods stirrings, and Gods will concerning marriage, by an absolute and infallible knowledge and assurance, and so come out of the defilement, and come to enjoy the honorable marriage. But the Worlds marriages can never be happy, though they have their carnal desires and self-ends, in riches, honours, and pleasures, &c.

Cain Cham & Esau had riches, honors, & pleasures; Nations, Cities, Dukedoms, and Mulick, *Tubal-Cain* the first inventer of Organs; but *Cane* was a Vagabond out from the presence of the Lord; *Cham* accursed; and *Esau* lost the blessing, and all of them and their seed enemies to Gods people to this day, though they may abound in worldly wealth, pomp, and pleasures.

If any object in mans wilddom concerning this writing, first witness in life what is here declared in words; and try if that may not answer all objections.

The manner how parties intending marriage are to go together.

Concerning the manner, see *G.F.* in his book concerning marriage, whereof here are some particulars inserted;

1. First, after the thing is known between the parties themselves, before any thing is concluded, let it be declared unto friends, who are able in the wisdom and power of God to see and feel into it, if they see the thing in the light and power of God, to stand: Then 2. Declare it in the meeting, or meetings, to which the parties do belong; towards the end of the meeting by the parties themselves, or some friend or friends, as it they are moved; both parties being present. 3. If any have to object against it, then the matter be laid before friends the next general meeting, appointed to consider of things relating to friends, to see into it and end it. 4. About twelve friends met together, they may declare their testimony how the Lord hath joyned them; there was a marriage in *Canaan*, and *Christ* and his Disciples were called to it; not married in a corner by one called a Minister, for money. 5. A Certificate by friends may be then given of the day, moneth and year, that it may be recorded. *Rebecca's* friends blessed her, so the people and Elders blessed *Ruth*; and so may friends do by words or silence, as moved of the Lord. 6. As any is moved, they may declare it to the Magistrate, or in the middle of the Market, to such parties outward dwelling if moved, (or they may not.) 7. The things that cannot be owned by all friends, and have unity within the power and spirit of God, may not be recorded. Who comes together with us in the beginning, comes over the Jews, Gentiles, and Apostate Christians, the honorable marriage, and the bed that is undefiled.

